The Social Questions Bulletin

Issued Monthly Except July and August by

THE METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICE
150 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY
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The general policies of this publication are determined by the Executive Committee of the Methodist Federation for Social Service, subject to approval by the General Council of the Federation. The selection of topics and material is committed to the Secretaries, who are responsible to the Federation and to the public for its accuracy.

Entered as second-class matter January 21, 1919, at the Postoffice at New York, N. Y., under Act of August 24, 1912. 312

Volume 24 | May, 1934 | No. 5

THE NEW DEAL AND WAR

THE ADMINISTRATION PREPARES.

A Military Machine? The New Deal set-up has been accepted, with widespread approval, as an instrument of economic recovery. Is it also an instrument of war? It has borrowed many features and some of the personnel—General Johnson, for instance—from the World War organization, and many men with army titles serve on local NRA boards. It uses military phraseology: A typical small town paper item refers to "the military organization" of the local NRA with a general, a woman lieutenant-general, colonels, majors, captains, companies. Especially it has concentrated power in the hands of the President similar to that of war-time. Its coordination of industries will fit into war-time mobilization. The President has now appealed to Congress to set up a Federal Communications Commission to bring all communications—radio, telegraph, telephone, cables—under one head.

CCC as War Measure. One of the earliest measures of the administration was the establishment of the CCC. $350,000,000 was allocated to this enterprise. It is giving 300,000 youth out-of-door training and military discipline. They were recruited under the direction of the War Department and army officers are in charge of the camps. Col. Duncan K. Major, Jr. says that the rapid recruiting of these young unemployed workers has been the most valuable experience the army has had since the World War. Asst. Secy. of War Woodring said in *Liberty* in January, "This achievement—the organization of over 300,000 men in more than 1,500 Civilian Conservation Corps camps—was the first real test of the army's plans for war mobilization under the National Defense Act as amended in 1920."

Under the Guise of Public Works. The public works section of the NIRA made available $3,300,000,000 for PW projects, to get men to work. It enumerated the sort of projects that might be undertaken. These included army and navy construction. The navy board at once applied for and got $238,000,000 for immediate construction of 32 war vessels. Announcement was made that this was to give work to the unemployed. As it turned out only $35,000,000 of this was to be used in 1933-34. $141,000,000 was to be used in the next fiscal year beginning July, 1934. Presently PWA funds to the navy were increased. Up to January 1, 1934, $274,765,924 had been so allotted. Up to the same date there had been appropriated to the army from PWA $95,377,050. Part of the navy money is going for navy yards and docks and part of it for planes. The army money goes for army housing, and technical construction, for motorization (see below), for air corps, planes, seacoast defenses, ordnance—and $592,161 of it for military cemeteries. CWA had $25,000,000 for war work. TVA has $50,000,000, a good part of which is going for explosive factories.

More Big Figures and Facts. Besides the PWA allotments for military purposes, the Roosevelt budget authorizes for the fiscal year 1935 $310,180,300 for direct navy expenditures (the total expenditures will run to at least $454,000,000), and $245,983,672 for the army. Also there is $248,000,000 in the army budget for the so-called non-military purposes of work on harbors, rivers, etc. Much of this is in fact, going for surveys of the ocean floors, apparently important only in regard to submarines, and for other work of war-time importance. In March the President signed the Vinson big navy bill authorizing 102 new warships, "the absolute high so far in the annals of war-mongering . . . . a prize product of the capitalist disarmament farce." Its sponsors submitted no accurate estimate of what it would cost, and no funds were allocated to it; competent estimates run from $750 million to one billion. Every commercial vessel built under the auspices of the U. S. Shipping Board must conform to specifications so

that guns can be mounted if desired. We have at present 3,000 army planes. A long time program for the construction of over 5,000 planes is being launched, in addition to the 1,184 new planes authorized for the navy under the Vinson bill.

Concerning the Army. The expansion of the army is less conspicuous than the big navy program. Here, as in all countries, it tends to take these forms: (1) Increasing the number of professional officers with the recognition that having these "an army can be assembled over night." General Hapgood of the U. S. Army says, "We propose to put infantry into the line of battle within ten days after they are inducted into service . . . by teaching the recruit how to lie in a trench before he learns how to drill on the parade ground."; (2) Mechanizing the army: our army plans include "armored cars capable of 50 miles an hour on plowed fields; small tanks traveling a mile a minute on concrete highways; huge mobile forts," etc. (3) Enlistment of the whole population in the combatant forces by means of an industrial mobilization plan. This includes contracts with industrialists by which they will, on order, convert their plants at once into factories for making war supplies; and the mobilization of labor forces.

Seven Bills. Toward the latter end the army has prepared drafts of seven bills to be passed in war time. These will give the government power to fix wages, to assign jobs, to close unessential industries, to arbitrate industrial disputes (and break strikes?), to see that war industries have sufficient labor power, to formulate "policies and methods for the control and stabilization of prices, wages and profits."

WHY?

Competition in Armaments. Our feverish war preparations are part of the current world picture. All of the industrialized nations are aggressively building up their fighting machines. They frighten and stimulate each other. A contributing factor is the ineffectiveness of the peace mechanism built up since the world war. The League of Nations proved unable to curb Japan. The Disarmament Conference has come to deadlock over Germany's insistence on re-arming. The Kellogg Peace Pact has gone into the discard. It is not certain that the non-aggression pacts will stand up any better against strain. The powers return to reliance upon arms and compete for the biggest and best.

How It Works. Our big navy men and the exporters who ship munitions, cotton and other products to the Orient want a large enough fleet to challenge Japan in Asiatic waters. The administration launches the navy building program. But Japan wants naval supremacy in the Far East. Her naval leaders say they will demand parity with the United States and Great Britain at the forthcoming Naval Conference, to be held before the London and Washington Treaties expire at the end of 1936. Big navy programs are designed to give trading points. So Japan announces that she will spend $156,000,000 in increasing her fleet. Secretary Swanson then states that it may become necessary to apply for more NIRA money. Presently President Roosevelt tells the press that he plans to ask Congress for authorization to use an indeterminate amount of PWA funds for naval construction in the fiscal year beginning July 1st. The press connects this with Japan's new announcement of hands off China. Neville Chamberlain announces that Great Britain will enter the naval race if the other nations refuse to reduce armaments. She has already in fact entered the race: her naval budget has been increased 6% above the 1933-34 figure. France in the meantime announces that she will start construction on 4 new ships. And Italy states that she will match French increases ship for ship.

"Slaughter for Sale." The munitions industry takes advantage of the instability and adds to it greatly. Its activities are just now being popularly aired. They were outlined by the League of Nations Temporary Mixed Commission as long ago as 1921. The munitions industry is bent on disturbing the peace because it profits from wars and war scares. Its salesmen go throughout the world, even among colonial peoples, drumming up business. It subsidizes the press, bribes officials, gets government people on its boards, connives with unscrupulous bankers, organizes international armament rings, plays one country off against another, and sells its wares to both, e. g., to Bolivia and Paraguay; to Peru and Colombia; to China and Japan. By the device of transshipment through neutrals in war time it even supplies the enemy with arms.

Can It Be Controlled? In these practices it but follows the way of all business for profit. In fact it is tied in, in numerous ways, with other business. Munitions industries make other things as well—typewriters, sewing machines, automobiles. Moreover, industries not known as such are in effect munitions industries—steel corporations which furnish the basic material and which are sharing the present boom of the munitions makers; also just now the automobile business since it supplies the army for its motorization program. Liberals who think that nationalization of munitions or international control, or both, are the remedy for profit making in war promotion do not reckon with these facts. Nor with the fact that, with a dozen exceptions, the nations of the world do not make their own munitions and are thus dependent on international sale of arms. Nor with the basic fact that the armament corporations are stronger than their governments, which sometimes subsidize them but cannot control

them, if they would. And what international body has power to control the international traffic in arms?

A MORE BASIC CAUSE OF WAR.

Back of the competitive war preparations is the mad rivalry of the capitalist nations over the contracting markets of the world. Also there is the new rivalry between two economic systems, declining capitalism and expanding communism.

Japan's Big Trade Program. A chief danger point is the Far East. Japan is economically aggressive. She is compelled to expand or perish, and expansion can come only through competition. She has come into the game late when the other powers had staked out their markets. Her business men have organized a Ten Year Export Plan. Her goods are increasingly finding their way into the British Dominions —Australia, New Zealand, Straits Settlements, India; into Africa—from Cape Town to Congo, to Abyssinia; into the Near East—Iraq, Persia, Egypt. She is setting up a European Central Bureau by way of getting into the Balkans, central and southern Europe. Now she is exporting to Latin-America. For the first half year of 1932 Japan's total exports to Latin-America mounted to 4,256,000 yen; for the first half year of 1933 they had climbed to 12,720,000 yen. She considers the great undeveloped market of China her chief preserve. This is back of her long-time program in which her aggression in Manchuria and her new declaration of hands off China are items. But the other capitalist countries have also long wanted this big market. They want it more desperately now that they have destroyed their home markets by keeping wages down while they have increased their productive plant. An intensified trade war is the result.

Bulwark Against Communism? Also Japan considers herself the stabilizer of Asia. Matsuoka and other statesmen have interpreted this to mean heading off communism. This complicates the relationships, for other imperialisms are in sympathy with this purpose. It illustrates what the Marxist calls the contradictions of capitalism. Shall Japan's economic rivals go to war with her for markets, or support her against the Soviet Union and the bolshevization of China, already about one-fourth soviet? British and Japanese textile interests are in bitter competition. The former have for months been besieging their government with demands for strong action against Japan. But the British financiers want to continue the long-standing friendship between their country and Japan—because of their rivalry with United States interests and their hostility to the Soviet Union. Also British munitions makers want to sell to Japan. United States manufacturers equip China with airplanes which are used to fight the communists in China. Japan approves the campaign, but fears the planes will be used against her.

Germany Comes Back. An equally dangerous situation exists in Central Europe. It centers in Fascist Germany. Like Japan, she must expand or perish. (And Italy is in a similar situation.) Germany's insistence on the right to rearm has an economic base. Her heavy industries in the Ruhr, "great dynamos of industrial power," demand markets and good access to raw materials. The Versailles Treaty left her short of both. Now she is repudiating the treaty and at the same time organizing action. She has her eye on the Ukraine, with its rich deposits of iron ore and manganese, coal mines and oil wells and with its rich agricultural land. Rosenberg, Hitler's Chief of the Dept. of Foreign Affairs, says the Ukraine must become an independent state with zones of influence reserved to Germany and Poland. Recently Germany and Poland, bitter enemies since the war over the Polish Corridor, have made a peace pact.

Against the Soviet Union? The real issue in Europe is Fascism vs. Communism. The program that Rosenberg outlines was set forth by Hitler in "My Battle": compensation for Germany's war losses by partition of the Soviet territory, to be secured by joint action. The program was put up to the London Economic Conference. It was vetoed as irrelevant, but there is much sympathy with it in all the European countries, and also in the United States. On the other hand, the powers know that a Germany strengthened by eastern expansion would be a new menace. This is another of the contradictions of capitalism.

Part of the Same Picture? The suggestion appears here and there in the press that there is a connection between Japanese and German designs on the Soviet Union. French newspapers say that they are "giving expression to a widespread belief" when they intimate that the German-Polish rapprochment means eastward expansion at Russia's expense, and that if Japan attacks in the east, the European powers may attack from the rear. Robert Briffault writes to the same effect in *Scribner's.* If Hitler should get recognition, in principle, from the western powers of his proposals for eastward expansion, "an attack on the Soviet Union by Japan would have overwhelming effect as an inducement to carry out the policy. . . ."

Economic Nationalism. The aggressive nationalism of Japan and Germany is typical of the post-war scene. Economic nationalism is the order of the day. It is a direct outcome of laissez-faire capitalism. In the expansion period of capitalism, the profit makers in each country use their freedom to build up powerful monopoly groups

which end the competition that is supposed to be the life of trade; use their governments to keep out their competitors by means of tariffs, etc.; compete for the markets furnished by the backward countries. At the same time they sell machinery to these so that they begin to supply themselves. This is another of the contradictions of capitalism. In the contracting period of capitalism in which we are now, these powerful groups with their concentrated wealth, accumulated surpluses and increasing productive efficiency, compete the more fiercely—for these shrinking markets. World debts mount; foreign trade declines. Governments, in behalf of these powerful business and financial groups, wage tariff, currency and price wars and try to collect uncollectable debts. International war is the almost inevitable consequence.

A NEW FORCE AGAINST WAR?

Can it be stopped? The methods on which we had relied since the World War—the legal contract between nations to keep the peace, international agreement to disarm, the good intentions expressed in the Peace Pact—have proved ineffective. There remains a hitherto untried force. The organized power of the millions.

Diffused Sentiment. There is in all the countries a widespread sentiment against war. It has grown steadily since the World War. John Strachey says that in Great Britain capitalist statesmen are afraid of it and are trying to keep the illusion alive that the Disarmament Conference has not failed. In this country the anti-war sentiment has registered itself strongly in the churches. Leading denominations are on record as to the nature of war. The Federal Council of Churches has sent a pastoral letter to "Christians of all lands" urging them to tell their governments that they will not give their moral support to war as a method of settling international difficulties. The Kirby Page questionnaire has in part documented conscious pacifism among preachers and their sense of its relation to the necessity of economic change.

More Anti-War Sentiment. The organized labor movement is a cross section of the country and as such shares the anti-war sentiment. Radical labor elements and radical farmer groups are consciously against war as part of capitalism. Communists and many other left-wing elements distinguish between class war and imperialist war. Membership of the Fellowship of Reconciliation has come to a parting of the ways on this issue, which is up also in other pacifist societies. Student opposition to the R. O. T. C. is marked and many students are taking the so-called Oxford oath that they will not support their country in war. A National Guard member reports much opposition to war in that organization.

Can It Be Organized? The sentiment is beginning to organize itself in a deliberate effort to stop war. Some church youth groups are agitating for a general strike, with their officers taking a leading part. The widespread anti-war demonstrations and strikes against war in colleges and some high schools on April 13th represented organized action. In some cases the school authorities opposed, in others supported the strike. Little anti-war societies are being organized in schools, among workers and among professionals. Many of these are affiliating with the American League Against War and Fascism. This is a new organization born of the United States Congress Against War, held in New York last September, and now affiliated with the World Committee Against War and Fascism. Its program calls for exposing the war preparations of the government, opposing policies of imperialism, supporting the peace policies of the Soviet Union, opposing all Fascist developments; especially it calls for effort to stop the manufacture and transport of munitions and other war materials. How effective such action by workers may be was shown after the war when British workers refused to load munitions for Poland to use against bolshevist Russia; and when Seattle workers refused to loan materials to be used by Kolchak in counter-revolution in Russia.

War itself is a mass mobilization. The only thing big enough to interfere with it seriously is a mass withdrawal of support.

If the workers will withdraw their efficiency in the manufacture and transport of war material, and if the preachers and educators will withhold their endorsement and talk against it instead of for it, can war and war preparations be checkmated?

But the bigger question is how to end war. The only way we can stop war is to organize the kind of society that does not make war. This is the point to including action against Fascism in the program against war. Fascism represents the kind of society that makes war inevitable.

Sources. In addition to those named, Foreign Policy Reports; Labor Fact Book, Vol. II; Statesmen's Year Book; pamphlets "Arms and the Men" and "Patriotism, Ltd."; "Merchants of Death" by Engelbrecht and Hanighen; Report of Kirby Page questionnaire; editorials in *New Republic; New York Times.*

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